

Application Serial No.: 10/085,110
Reply to Office Action dated August 19, 2005

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9, 10, 12-15, 17, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, and 29-31 are presently active in this case, Claims 1, 9, 20, 29, and 31 having been amended by way of the present Amendment. Claims 3, 8, 11, 16, 18, 19, 22, 25, 27, and 28 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

In the outstanding Official Action, Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9, 10, 12-15, 17, 20, 21, 23-26, and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shinohara (U.S. Patent No. 5,575,569) in view of Daikuhara (U.S. Patent No. 6,402,386). Claims 29 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shinohara in view of Daikuhara and further in view of Langström (U.S. Patent No. 3,743,369). For the reasons discussed below, the Applicant requests the withdrawal of the obviousness rejections.

The basic requirements for establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness as set forth in MPEP 2143 include (1) there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings, (2) there must be a reasonable expectation of success, and (3) the reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all of the claim limitations. The Applicant submits that a *prima facie* case of obviousness cannot be established in the present case because (1) the cited references, either

when taken singularly or in combination, do not teach or suggest all of the claim limitations, and (2) there is no suggestion or motivation to modify the references to arrive at the present invention.

Claim 1 of the present application recites a cage comprising, among other features, at least one substantially closed storage space for lubricant between the two chambers, wherein a first closed conduit is provided from the storage space to one of the two chambers and a second closed conduit is provided from the storage space to the other of the two chambers.

Claim 9 recites a roller bearing comprising a cage comprising, among other features, at least one storage space for lubricant between the two chambers, wherein a first closed conduit is provided from the at least one storage space to one of the two chambers and a second closed conduit is provided from the at least one storage space to the other of the two chambers.

Claim 29 recites a cage comprising, among other features, a storage space for lubricant between a first chamber configured to house a first rotating element and a second chamber configured to house a second rotating element, wherein an end of a first closed conduit opens into the storage space through a first lateral wall and the other end thereof opens into the first chamber, and wherein an end of a second closed conduit opens into the storage space through a second lateral wall and the other end thereof opens into the second chamber. Claim 31 recites a cage comprising, among other features, means for storing and supplying a lubricant for the rotating elements, wherein said means comprises a storage space provided between two adjacent chambers of the at least two chambers, a first closed conduit extending from the

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storage space to one of the two adjacent chambers, and a second closed conduit extending from the storage space to the other of the two adjacent chambers.

As noted on page 3 of the Official Action, the Shinohara reference and the Daikuhara reference do not disclose first and second closed conduits, which open into the chambers. The Shinohara reference, in fact, does not disclose any type of closed conduit that extends from any of the grease reserve portions (27) to any of the receiving portions (26). And clearly, the Shinohara reference does not disclose a storage space that has a first closed conduit that extends therefrom to a chamber and a second closed conduit that extends therefrom to another chamber, as recited in Claims 1, 9, 29, and 31 of the present application. Additionally, the Daikuhara reference also does not disclose any type of closed conduit that extends from any of the connection portions (22) to any of the pockets (21). And clearly, the Daikuhara reference does not disclose a storage space that has a first closed conduit that extends therefrom to a chamber and a second closed conduit that extends therefrom to another chamber, as recited in Claims 1, 9, 29, and 31 of the present application.

The Langström reference describes cages of synthetic resin for rolling bearings. As depicted in the drawings, the cages include collars (4) and ridges (5) that together form a number of chambers (7), which in pairs will substantially enclose each rolling body. Each chamber is connected to an external face of the annulus by way of a passage (8), which starts at a point close by the transient portion between the annulus (1) and the pertaining collar (4).

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A further passage (9) for the supply of lubricant to the step of the outer race ring (13) is located where the collar (4) merges into one of the ridges (5).

The Applicant submits that the Langström reference does not supplement the deficiencies noted above in the teachings of the Shinohara and Daikuhara reference, since the Langström reference does not disclose a storage space that has a first closed conduit that extends therefrom to a chamber and a second closed conduit that extends therefrom to another chamber, as recited in Claims 1, 9, 29, and 31 of the present application. The Applicant notes that each passage (8, 9) of the each chamber (7) of the Langström reference extends from that particular chamber to a portion housing a single respective rolling body. The Langström reference does not disclose a storage space that has two closed conduits that extends from that storage space to two different chambers.

The Applicant submits that the cited references, either when taken singularly or in combination, do not teach or suggest all of the limitations recited in Claims 1, 9, 29, and 31 for the reasons set forth above. Thus, the Applicant submits that a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been established for Claims 1, 9, 29, and 31. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the obviousness rejection of Claims 1, 9, 29, and 31.

The dependent claims are considered allowable for the reasons advanced for the independent claim from which they respectively depend. These claims are further considered allowable as they recite other features of the invention that are neither disclosed nor suggested by the applied references when those features are considered within the context of

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their respective independent claim. (Note disclosure on page 7, line 6, for support for some of the dependent claims.)

Claim 20 of the present application advantageously recites a cage comprising, among other features, at least one substantially closed storage space for lubricant between the two chambers, said storage space comprising at least one outlet for the lubricant, wherein the at least one outlet comprises a slot having a first portion with a first width adjacent to the bottom and a second portion with a second width adjacent to the opening, and wherein the first width is greater than the second width. The Applicant submits that the cited references, either when taken singularly or in combination, do not disclose a slot having a first portion with a first width adjacent to the bottom and a second portion with a second width adjacent to the opening, wherein the first width is greater than the second width, as recited in Claim 20. (See, e.g., page 6, paragraph 0027 for support.)

The Daikuhara and Langström references do not disclose any type of slot. The Shinohara reference describes slits (36) that have a uniform width along the length thereof. Thus, the Applicant submits that the cited references, either when taken singularly or in combination, do not teach or suggest all of the limitations recited in Claim 20. Thus, the Applicant submits that a *prima facie* case of obviousness cannot be established for Claim 20. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the obviousness rejection of Claim 20.

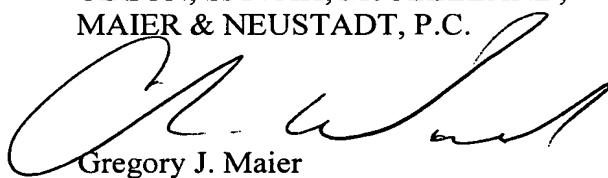
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The claims that depend from Claim 20 are considered allowable for the reasons advanced for independent Claim 20. These claims are further considered allowable as they recite other features of the invention that are neither disclosed nor suggested by the applied references when those features are considered within the context of Claim 20.

Consequently, in view of the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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